

# Maryland DNR Forest Service

## Forest Stewardship Program

## Forest Land Enhancement Program

### State Priority Plan

11/17/03

Prepared by:

Director / State Forester Steven W. Koehn  
and the State Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee

## **I. General Information, Background (Program Purpose, Audience, Beneficiaries) (Sec. 230.30)**

(a) The Forest Land Enhancement Program (FLEP) is authorized under the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978 as amended by the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, and is established to provide additional financial assistance to State Foresters to encourage the long-term sustainability of non-industrial private forest lands (NIPF) and to compliment State sustainable forestry programs.

(b) This State Priority Plan, (SPP) sets forth the rules and procedures by which the FLEP will be administered by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources – Forest Service, heretofore (MFS) to promote sustainable forest management practices on non-industrial private forest land. The resource management expertise, educational, and financial assistance provided under the Program shall complement rather than replace or duplicate any existing state and / or federal programs providing assistance on NIPF. Management activities and practices funded under this program shall be designed to provide multiple resource benefits.

(c) (1) Apportionment of funds received under this should result in a balanced and coordinated state and federal program that provides management expertise, financial assistance, and education to NIPF owners. State and other programs will be used to complement the program objectives.

(2) Currently the MFS employs 109 FTEs to work on private lands, while Maryland Cooperative Extension provides landowner educational programming and materials. Thus, FLEP will be used to augment gaps in the service, education and financial assistance not being addressed with existing programs. Technical assistance to implement FLEP practices will be provided by the MFS, Maryland Fisheries Service, Maryland Wildlife & Heritage Service, consulting foresters and other natural resource professionals.

(3) The FLEP educational program will include technical training to resource professionals to improve efficiency and effectiveness in the implementation of FLEP practices. Workshops will be conducted for forest land owners to acquaint them with State programs and related forestry topics. Grants may be provided to Maryland Cooperative Extension and/or other sources to provide additional education opportunities to NIPF landowners. Evaluation of the educational activities will be provided by course evaluation and surveys.

## **II. Definitions (Sec. 230.31)**

As delineated in this section of the FLEP Interim final rule the following terms shall mean.

**Capital Investment or Improvement:** Durable equipment or assets capable of being amortized or depreciated over a period of 3 or more years.

**Catastrophic event:** A large scale, destructive, natural event, which for the purposes of the Program, shall include but not be limited to wildfire, drought, floods, windstorm, freezing, ice storm, hail, sleet, mudslides, landslides, earthquakes, avalanches, tornadoes, volcanoes, hurricanes, or tsunamis.

**Chief:** The head of the USDA Forest Service.

**Committee:** The State Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee (SFSCC) established pursuant to section 16 USC 2113 of the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act as amended (16 U.S.C. 2101, et seq.).

**Concurrence:** Review, verification, and confirmation, by the Responsible Official that the State Priority Plan contains all of the key elements included in the law and regulations.

**Cost-share:** Payment, which is used to offset a maximum of 75 percent of the cost incurred by a landowner for implementation of a State approved activity or practice, authorized under this Program.

**Financial assistance:** Funds disbursed from the Program's annual apportionment to States under this Act.

**Fiscal year:** The fiscal year of the United States Government, which is October 1 through September 30.

**Landowner:** Owner of non-industrial private forest land or a leaseholder who controls the land for the minimum length of time for any practice to be established; excluding corporations whose stocks are publicly traded or owners principally engaged in the processing of wood products.

**Management plan:** All plans must meet the standards of a Forest Stewardship Plan to render practices eligible for cost sharing. A plan prepared by a natural resource management professional and approved by the State Forester that describes projects and activities to be carried out by the landowner, consistent with the landowner's objectives is acceptable. The plan shall apply to those portions of the landowner's property on which any practice or activity funded under the Program shall be carried out, as well as lands of the owner that are affected by the activity or practice. Forest Stewardship Plans must contain the following components as delineated in Maryland DNR – Forest Service operation order 2003-302: title page, maps delineating tract boundaries and soils and wetlands as needed, landowners objectives, stand recommendations, practice schedule, and appropriate inserts to describe practices, services and or programs offered.

**Natural resource management professional:** Any person who is recognized by the State Forester as having the knowledge and skills to develop landowner plans for managing the biological, economic, and environmental interrelationship of forest resources and to identify appropriate activities to manage, protect, or enhance forest resources.

**Non-industrial private forest land (NIPF):** Rural lands with existing tree cover, or which are suitable for growing trees, and are owned by any non-industrial private individual, group, association, corporation, Indian tribe, or other private legal entity so long as the individual, group, association, corporation, tribe, or entity has definitive decision-making authority over the lands.

**Practice:** A prescribed sustainable forestry activity consistent with the management plan and implemented through the Program that results in improved conditions on non-industrial private forest land. A practice may consist of multiple activities.

**Responsible Official:** Forest Service Regional Forester, Area Director, or Institute Director charged with the administration of the Program.

**Service representative:** A natural resource management professional designated by the State Forester to perform any or all of the following technical assistance functions: review and approval of landowner plans; determination of need and feasibility of practices; establishment of site – specific practice specifications; and certification of completion of practices and performance of compliance checks pursuant to this subpart.

**State:** Includes each of the several States in the United States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands of the United States, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

**State Forester:** The director or other head of a State Forestry Agency or equivalent State official.

**State Priority Plan:** A document required for a State to participate in the Program that is jointly prepared by a State Forester and a State Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee, to facilitate long-term sustainability of non-industrial private forest lands within the State.

### **III. National Program Administration (Sec. 230.32) The Chief will:**

(a) The Chief of the Forest Service, in collaboration with State Foresters, shall oversee the development and implementation of Program policy and procedures including the monitoring of implementation over the life of the Program.

(b) The Chief shall implement the Program in partnership with the State Forestry agency and in consultation with other Federal, State and local natural resource management agencies, institutions of higher learning and a broad range of private sector interests.

(c) The Chief shall annually distribute such financial assistance funds as may be available for the Program through the appropriate Responsible Official. In making distributions under this subsection, the Chief shall consult with the National Association of State Foresters Forest Resource Management Committee or its successor.

(d) No match of funds is required from the State for participation in this Program.

(e) Program financial assistance may be disbursed to a third party, such as the Farm Services Agency, a Soil Conservation District office or a non-profit organization, that will assist in program delivery with the approval of the State Forester. The US Forest Service may not disburse funds directly to non-profits and private organizations.

(f) Each State shall be allowed to request up to \$50,000 of their first year allocation for the Program, prior to Forest Service concurrence with a State Priority Plan, in order to facilitate development of the Program within the respective State.

(g) With the exception of (f), no grant shall be undertaken between the Forest Service and a State or its designated representative, until the Responsible Official has concurred with the State Priority Plan.

(h) Final authority to resolve all issues that may arise in the administration of the Program is vested in the Chief, who shall exercise that authority following consultation with the State Foresters.

(i) The Forest Service shall provide national and regional Program administrative and financial support and oversight through distribution of available Program funds to State Foresters and through monitoring and review and evaluation of Program activities and accomplishments. The Forest Service shall also provide the Administration, Congress, and the Commodity Credit Corporation with appropriate Program progress reports.

(j) No Program funds shall be used for capital investments or capital improvements unless specifically authorized in the grant. No individual capital investments or capital improvement greater than \$5,000 are allowed. No Program funds shall be used for the purchase of land or any interest in land, or any interest in an endowment.

(k) By September 30, 2006, the Chief shall submit a report to the Secretary of Agriculture, summarizing all activities and practices funded under the Program as of that date.

**IV. Regional Program Administration (Sec 230.33) The Regional Official will:**

- (a) The Responsible Official shall review and provide concurrence with State Priority Plans, including any revisions of such plans.
- (b) By September 1, 2006, the Responsible Official shall submit a report to the Chief summarizing all activities and practices funded under the Program as of that date, along with copies of reports from the participating States.
- (c) An annual report shall be submitted by the Responsible Official to the Chief summarizing all activities and practices funded under the Program for the previous fiscal year.
- (d) The Responsible Official shall reimburse funds to the State Forester or their designated third party in a timely manner.
- (f) The Responsible Official shall determine the final fund distribution to Maryland.

**V. State Program Administration (Sec. 230.34) The State Forester will:**

- (a) The State Forester, in coordination with the State Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee, shall implement the Forest Land Enhancement Program in Maryland.
- (b) To participate in the Program, the State Forester and Committee shall jointly develop a State Priority Plan designed to facilitate long-term sustainability of non-industrial private forest land within Maryland. Our plan shall be submitted to the appropriate Responsible Official for concurrence.
- (c) The State Forester shall develop, implement, and administer the Program consistent with the State Priority Plan.
- (d) By July 15, 2006, the State Forester of Maryland shall submit to the respective Responsible Official a summary report of all State activities and practices funded through FLEP as of June 1, 2006.
- (e) An annual report shall be submitted by Maryland to the respective Responsible Official summarizing all activities and practices funded under the Program for the previous fiscal year. The report will contain data on accomplishments by educational assistance, technical assistance and cost share assistance based on State objectives and measurable outcomes included in our State Priority Plan.
- (f) No match of funds is required from Maryland for participation in FLEP.
- (g) The MFS may conduct random property inspections to determine practice compliance.

**VI. FLEP Elements (Sec. 230.35)**

- (a) Maryland will use Forest Land Enhancement Program funds to assist landowners in managing their non-industrial private forest lands and related resources through the following components:
  - (1) financial assistance/cost-share programs.
  - (2) resource management expertise/technical assistance.
  - (3) development and implementation of educational programs.
- (b) Maryland may use 20% of the allocated funds for Program administration costs.

**VII. Priority State Plan – purpose and scope (SEC 230.36)**

- (a) Maryland's State Priority Plan (SSP) is developed and will be maintained to establish program priorities, policies and procedures. In implementing the program, Maryland shall target resources to achieve the objects of the federal program by providing technical assistance, financial assistance and conservation education programming for landowners that participate in the program. Maryland's objectives are in accordance with the federal guidelines and program objectives. The federal objectives of this program are to invest in practices to establish, restore, manage, maintain, and enhance the health and productivity of the NIPF lands in Maryland for timber, habitat for flora and fauna, soil, water and air quality, wetlands and riparian buffers. The program targets afforestation, reforestation, improvement of poorly stocked stands, timber stand improvement, practices necessary to improve seedling growth and survival and growth enhancement practices occur where needed to enhance and sustain the long-term productivity of timber and non-timber forest resources to help meet the future public demand for all forest resources and provide environmental benefits.

Other objectives are to reduce the risks and to help restore, recover and mitigate the damage to forest caused by fire, insects, invasive species, disease and damages weather.

(b) This plan outlines program policies, priorities and procedures necessary to accomplish the objectives. It has been developed by the State Forester with concurrence of the SFSCC. The SPP will be published on the MFS web site and shared with the NRCS, Technical Committee.

(c) The plan will cover FFY's 02 through 07, beginning 10/1/02 through 9/30/07 and contingent on funding to Maryland. The plan can be revised as necessary.

(d) The duties and responsibilities of the Maryland State Forester and the SFSCC are as follows:

**1) State Forester will:**

Develop and maintain State Priority Plan to establish program priorities, policies and procedures

Document SFSCC program involvement

Administer FLEP Funding

Monitor program progress

Report accomplishments to USDA-FS

Approve Maryland's Forest Stewardship Five Year Strategic Plan

**2) State Stewardship Coordinating Committee will:**

Development, review and approval of State Priority Plan

Maintain written record of program involvement through minutes and other process documentation

Monitor, record and report program progress and accomplishments to the USDA Forest Service.

Provide input on Maryland's Forest Stewardship Five Year Strategic Plan

Other Agencies / Organizations not represented on SFSCC may participate in the Program by providing Input via a committee member.

(e) Upon receipt of FLEP funding, our financial assistance program will be administered by MFS in a manner patterned after the Woodland Incentive Program (WIP) State cost-share program. The MFS will enter into a MOU with a County SCD office to pay non-industrial private forest landowner's (NIPFLO's) for FLEP cost share practices approved by the State Forester and the SFSCC.

(f) The program's progress will be monitored by MFS staff. Accomplishments reporting will be made using standard reporting procedures.

(g) This plan has been developed by the State Forester with concurrence of the SFSCC and with the consideration of public input. The SFSCC represented a broad cross section of environmental and natural resource oriented organizations. Members were encouraged to solicit comments from their respective organizations. FLEP program description was posted on our web site for public review and comment. FLEP information has been distributed at NRCS State Technical Committee meetings that are open to the public.

(h) Upon completion, the SPP was submitted to the USFS, Area Director, in Newtown Square, for concurrence.

(i) The baseline data on the forest resources of the State can be found in the publications "Forest Statistics for Maryland: 1986 and 1999" authored by Thomas Frieswyk in the Forest Inventory & Analysis Unit, NE Research Station, USDA Forest Service and in the State Stewardship Five Year Strategic Plan. See appendix # 7 of this SPP.

(j) Maryland priorities will be in concert with the national priorities for the program. Initially, applications will be reviewed on a first come first served, continuous basis until all the funds are obligated. As a State participant in the pilot project "Stewardship Spatial Analysis Initiative" we hope to align our future FLEP delivery in a more focused manner to areas of greatest environmental need.

The FLEP cost-share program will be used to augment the existing state program and provide cost-share funds for multiple use practices not covered in the state program and provide additional funding for traditional practices found in the state program.

Depending on the total allocation to the state, we anticipate approximately 65% for cost-share assistance, 20% of the funds for program administration and technical assistance and 15% for education. The administrative funds will be used to support program oversight including processing applications, issuing payments and maintaining program records and documentation.

In a cooperative effort to augment FLEP financial assistance to Maryland's NIFLO's, the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) has earmarked 8.1% of their Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) cost share funding for FLEP 2, 3 & 4 forestry practices to include afforestation, reforestation, forest stand improvement and agroforestry wind and shelterbelts plantings.

Maryland's Five Year Forest Stewardship Strategic Plan delineates the following goals, objectives, and action items.

The Forest Stewardship Program has set the following goals for its activities over the five-year period from FY2002 through FY2006. Implementation of these action items will help achieve successful implementation of these goals and objectives which, in turn, will help meet the overall goals of the Forest Stewardship Program, the United States Forest Service Landowner Assistance Programs and the Department of Natural Resources. Our activities are designed to reach Marylanders with forestry messages from 'cradle to grave' to ensure that all citizens realize and appreciate the value of trees and forests to their lives and livelihood.

The Maryland Forest Service Stewardship Program FLEP focus is to:

- Manage the forest for all its resource benefits.
- Broaden the range of forest resource conservation options and multi-agency services available to private landowners.
- Encourage forest stewardship planning prior to implementation of any resource management activity.
- Educate Maryland citizens about the values of all forest resources and their management.
- Encourage private landowners to practice forest stewardship and to leave the land and its resources in better condition for future generations.

Our FLEP outcomes are intended to:

- Reduce the risk of wildfire.
- Increase forest health, including control of invasive species.
- Manage forests for ecosystem sustainability.
- Decrease forest fragmentation.

Numerical annual targets are delineated in the Stewardship narrative section of our consolidated 424 grant package for FFY03.

**Goal 1: Increase awareness and understanding of Forest Stewardship among our client base.**

*DNR Goals:*

A natural resource stewardship ethic for Marylanders

*USFS Landowner Assistance Goals:*

Awareness

**Objective 1 - Seek out and develop partnerships with non-government conservation organizations**

Action items:

1. Meet with organizations with similar land stewardship objectives to discuss opportunities to provide Forest Stewardship Program information to their members or partners. Examples are: Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Ducks Unlimited, Trust for Public Lands, local land trusts, Maryland Environmental Trust, Maryland Forest Association, Association of Forest Industries, Maryland Tree Farm System, Farm Bureau, Local Watershed Associations etc.

2. Establish stewardship demonstration areas in cooperation with these partners.

**Objective 2 - Focus education efforts with organizations listed above plus schools, governmental organizations, local decision makers and legislators (via partners)**

Action items:

1. Refine existing information or develop new material as necessary to create a dynamic and interactive set of lesson plans that are age and knowledge level appropriate.
2. Work with Project Learning Tree (PLT) to include the stewardship message
3. Add a school teacher/educator to the SFSCC.
4. Work with the Maryland Cooperative Extension to better coordinate educational outreach opportunities for forest landowners.

**Goal 2: Encourage the management of the forest for all its values to ensure a sustainable, productive, and economically viable forest land base.**

*DNR Goals:*

Healthy Maryland watershed lands, streams and non-tidal rivers.

A natural resource stewardship ethic for Marylanders.

Vibrant local communities in balance with natural systems

*USFS Landowner Assistance Goals:*

Improving forest management

Sustaining a productive forest land base emphasizing economic viability of privately owned forest land.

Improve educational outreach opportunities for landowners

**Objective 1 - Improve financial assistance opportunities for landowners.**

Action items:

1. Work with external partners to press for additional funds for existing cost-share programs or to develop new ones to enable landowners to accomplish on-the-ground forest stewardship activities.

2. Encourage partners to work with elected officials to enact more favorable income and property tax status for forest ownership and management

3. Utilize FLEP funds on private-non-industrial forest land. Rates and practices set by MFSCC and State Forester.

4. Coordinate with NRCS and the State Technical Committee to identify practices and guidelines for use of EQIP funds for forest stewardship activities on non-industrial private forest land.

**Objective 2 - Improve technical assistance opportunities for landowners.**

Action items:

1. Encourage more consulting foresters to prepare forest management plans using Forest Stewardship guidelines

2. Provide landowners with a list of consulting foresters and an explanation of their services

3. Develop and distribute a list of wildlife consultants to better meet the wildlife habitat management desires of landowners

4. Develop and distribute a list of aquatic resource consultants for landowners with streams and ponds on their property.

**Objective 3 - Ensure an adequate supply of seedlings to support all reforestation, afforestation, and riparian buffer planting efforts.**

Action items:

1. Work with partners such as the Potomac Watershed Partnership, Growing Native and others to ensure sufficient seed is collected each year to enable the John S. Ayton Nursery to meet the projected needs.

2. Identify potential native replacements with adequate seed sources for non-native species currently in production.

**Goal: 3 Provide coordinated land management assistance to Maryland's forest landowners.**

*DNR Goals:*

Healthy Maryland watershed lands, streams and non-tidal rivers.

A natural resource stewardship ethic for Marylanders.

Vibrant local communities in balance with natural systems.

Ensure a diverse, well-supported, cooperative and informed workforce.

Assure efficient and effective operations.

*USFS Landowner Assistance Goals:*

Improving Forest Management

Sustaining a Productive Forest Land Base

Coordinating Delivery of Assistance Programs

**Objective 1 - Develop a program of professional cross training among resource managers**

Action items:

1. Develop a list of issues/subjects foresters should be more familiar with in order to provide better service and a higher quality stewardship plan to the landowners

2. Ask sister agencies for their input on forestry related topics that would be useful for their personnel.

3. Develop curricula, lesson plans and cadre of instructors to carry out the program

4. Work with natural resource organizations such as MCE, the Society of American Foresters and others to develop professional training programs on relevant topics.

**Objective 2 - Develop one standard delivery system for landowner management plans for the Department**

Action items:

1. Coordinate with all DNR agencies that provide landowner land management assistance.
2. Develop training sessions on: better plan preparation, communication written and verbal skills, etc.
3. Partner with existing landowner assistance groups to coordinate and blend services to landowners.

**Goal 4: Increase landowner participation in Forest Stewardship programs.**

*DNR Goals:*

Healthy Maryland watershed lands, streams and non-tidal rivers.

A natural resource stewardship ethic for Marylanders.

Vibrant local communities in balance with natural systems.

*USFS Landowner Assistance Goals:*

Awareness

Improving Forest Management

Sustaining a Productive Forest Land Base

**Objective 1 - increase participation of small woodlot owners**

Action items:

1. Develop a training program to enable landowners to evaluate their own forest land and prepare a basic stewardship plan.

**Objective 2 - Increase number of foresters and natural resource management professionals available to offer technical assistance.**

Action items:

1. Support the recommendations in the Governor's Task Force on Forestry report.
2. Encourage more consulting foresters via training sessions to prepare forest management plans using Forest Stewardship guidelines by utilizing FLEP funds in the preparation of forest stewardship plans.
3. Provide landowners with a list of consulting foresters and an explanation of their services.
4. Develop and distribute a list of wildlife consultants to better meet the wildlife habitat management desires of landowners.
5. Develop and distribute a list of aquatic resource consultants to landowners with streams and ponds on their property.

**Objective 3 - improve education efforts to reach the landowning public, decision makers, conservation organizations as well as the general public.**

Action items:

1. Provide financial support for landowner education seminars that are routinely held in all four regions of Maryland.
2. Develop a high quality, Maryland specific Forest Stewardship video for distribution and use by schools, external and internal partners, libraries etc.
3. Provide education and training opportunities to all partners.

**Goal 5: Encourage internal DNR support for Forest Stewardship programs.**

*DNR Goals:*

Ensure a diverse, well-supported, cooperative and informed workforce.

*USFS Landowner Assistance Goals:*

Awareness

Improving Forest Management

**Objective 1 - Promote activities and accomplishments**

Action items:

1. Develop a high quality, Maryland specific Forest Stewardship video for distribution and use by schools, external and internal partners, libraries, etc.
2. Provide information and articles when appropriate for inclusion in DNR information outlets such as "This Just In" and "The Natural Resource."



3. Develop an internal tracking process to quantify forest landowner assists on a quarterly basis by MFS personnel.

**Objective 2 - Work with other agencies to provide education, training and land management assistance.**

**Action items**

1. Work with State Forest and Park, Fisheries Service and Wildlife and Heritage personnel to develop stewardship demonstration sites on State land.
  2. Provide forest stewardship input to Rural Legacy Program application reviews.
  3. Work with Chesapeake & Coastal Watershed Service to fully implement the Strategic Forest Lands Assessment.
- (k) Cost-share will be made available according to section X.  
Ownership and acreage limitations are found in section X (7).  
Forest Management Plan is defined in section II & XI.
- (l) Annual and aggregate payment is found in section XII
- (m) Eligible practices are found in section XI
- (n) Payment of cost-share is covered in section XII. Cost-share rates were developed based on the experience with the WIP program, FIP and SIP and given a priority for all practices.
- (o) This plan addresses:  
Application procedure, see XIII  
Approval process, see XIII  
Contract length, see XV (a)  
Cancellation of practice, see XV (a)  
Certification of performance, see XV (b)  
Payment, see XV  
Maintenance and compliance, see XI (8)  
Recapture of funds, see XVII  
Appeals procedures, see XVIII
- (p) The SPP will be displayed on the MFS web site and available upon request.

This plan was submitted on 12/1/02 to the NA Area Director for concurrence.  
A revised plan was submitted on 11/17/03.

**VIII. State Priority Plan, education assistance. (Sec. 230.37)**

Strategies and action items are delineated in our Conservation Education Five Year Strategic Plan and in our Civil Rights Outreach Plan (refer to appendix # 6). Educational activities will take the form of providing funding and presenting at landowner stewardship seminars, news releases in newspapers, feature articles in the DNR Natural Resource magazine, teacher and students weeklong workshops, training sessions and web site construction. Fifteen percent of our FLEP apportionment is earmarked for education assistance. Annual educational related deliverables are delineated in the FFY 03 grant narrative. Slippage will be carried forward to the succeeding year or as directed by the SFSCC and State Forester. Program accountability will be insured by SFSCC oversight, State legislative program audits and USDA Forest Service Program reviews.

**IX. State Priority Plan, technical assistance (Sec. 230.38)**

The types and recipients of our efforts are delineated in our goals and objectives. Those providing technical assistance consists of MFS Service Foresters, I & E Regional Specialists, Consultant Foresters and Industrial Foresters. Outreach efforts will consist of training workshops targeting teachers, high school students, environmental professionals, property owners and managers. Twenty percent of our FLEP apportionment is earmarked for technical assistance.

The delivery of technical assistance will be a collaborative effort consisting of MFS service foresters, MFS I & E specialists, consultant and industrial foresters, Maryland Forest Conservancy District Boards, Maryland Tree Farm System and the Maryland Cooperative Extension Service. Outreach efforts will consist of one on one contact with NIPFLO's, educational seminars, technical literature made available on the MFS website and a possible grant to MCES to partially fund an education specialist focusing on Stewardship outreach to include

FLEP. Short term goals are to produce and deliver educational workshops designed to reach elementary school age children to adults via Arbor Day School Program School Forests Projects, Envirothon training and competitions, Project Learning Tree workshops, teacher workshops, Forestry Camp for high school students and regional landowner seminars. Long-term results are to have a better educated more informed public who appreciate the merits of forest stewardship ethics and practices and to increase forest stewardship plan enrollment to 10% of eligible land by 2010. The Forest Stewardship Program Manager or his designee will report accomplishments annually via PMAS.

**X. State Priority Plan, financial assistance (Sec.230.39)**

Approximately 65% of our FLEP apportionment will be earmarked for financial assistance. The State Forester and SFSCC will establish practices, set rates, review and approve applications. Cost share practices, percentages and rates are delineated in appendix # 4. A partnership has been forged with NRCS to utilize EQIP cost share funding in concert with FLEP practices. FLEP practices 2, 3 & 4 will be earmarked for EQIP funding. FLEP funding will be made available for FLEP practices 2, 3, & 4 when EQIP funding has been exhausted and or terminated. The MFS will contract with a local SCD office to serve as banker in cutting checks for landowner reimbursements. Accomplishments will be recorded and transmitted to the USDA Forest Service annually by FLEP practice. Slippage will be carried forward to the succeeding year or as directed by the SFSCC and State Forester. Program accountability will be insured by SFSCC oversight, State legislative program audits, and USDA Forest Service Program reviews.

**XI. Eligibility Requirements (Sec. 230.41)**

**(a) Who Qualifies for FLEP Assistance**

(1)Non-industrial Private Forest Landowners qualify for FLEP. *Owner* means any private individual, group, association, corporation, Indian tribe or other native group, or other private legal entity, excluding corporations whose stocks are publicly traded or legal entities principally engaged in the production of wood products.

(2)All NIPF landowners as defined in Sec. 230.2 of the draft rule, including those who produce forest products on a part-time or intermittent basis, who meet the requirements of this section, are eligible to apply for and receive assistance under the program without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, marital status, handicap or sexual orientation.

(3)MFS personnel are eligible for FLEP. Projects on land belonging to full-time MFS employees will be approved/disapproved by the Director/State Forester.

(4)Public ownerships do not qualify.

(5)Limitations of cost-share: A landowner is eligible to receive a cost share maximum annual amount up to \$5,000 annually and a maximum aggregate payment of \$25,000.00 through 2007.

(6)A Forest Stewardship Plan or any resource conservation plan that meets the standards of a Forest Stewardship Plan may be cost-shared and is exempt from the acreage limitations described in subpart (b).

(7)Minimum acreage ownership or minimum project size: Landowners must have at least FIVE (5) acres of non-industrial private forest land (NIPF), or non-forest acres scheduled to be afforested. One acre will be the minimum practice size.

(8)Landowners must agree to maintain FLEP practices for a minimum of 10 years unless otherwise designated by SFSCC. Landowners who fail to maintain the practice for 10 years will be required to repay the MFS cost share (plus 10 per cent). If the property is sold the seller must inform the buyer of any remaining requirements resulting from receipt of FLEP cost share funding.

(9) A landowner must have a Forest Stewardship Plan prior to receiving approval to implement any FLEP practice, except for Forest Stewardship Plan development. A MD DNR Forest Service, service forester must approve the plan.

**XII. Forest Management Plan (Sec. 230.40)**

(a) Landowners must have a Forest Stewardship/Management Plan that meets FSP standards to qualify for FLEP, that describes projects and activities to be carried out by the landowner, consistent with the landowner's objectives. All forest management plans must meet the standards of a Forest Stewardship Plan to render the property and or FLEP practice eligible for cost share funding. A plan may be prepared by a natural resource management professional and approved by the State Forester that describes projects and activities to be carried out by the landowner, consistent with the

landowner's objectives. The plan shall apply to those portions of the landowner's property on which any practice or activity funded under the Program shall be carried out, as well as lands of the owner that are affected by the activity or practice. Forest Stewardship Plans/Management Plans must contain the following components as delineated in Maryland DNR – Forest Service Operations Order 2003-302: title page, maps delineating tract boundaries and soils and wetlands as needed, landowners objectives, stand recommendations, practice schedule and appropriate inserts to describe practices, services and or programs offered.

### **Program Practices**

Activities under each practice, cost-share percent, and maximum payment are in Appendix # 4.

FLEP 1-Forest Stewardship Plans

FLEP 2-Afforestation / Reforestation

FLEP 3-Forest Stand Improvement

FLEP 4-Agroforestry

FLEP 5-Water Quality Improvement and Watershed Protection

FLEP 6-Fish and Wildlife Habitat

FLEP 7-Forest Health and Protection

FLEP 8-Invasive Species Control

FLEP 9-Fire and Catastrophic Risk Reduction

FLEP 10-Fire and Catastrophic Event Rehabilitation

FLEP 11-Special Practices

In the application and use of pesticides, including biological, chemical, and behavioral substances, practice performance shall meet all label requirements, State and Federal regulations, and local ordinances. Anyone who carries out practices under this Program shall be responsible for obtaining the authorities, rights, easements, or other approvals necessary to the performance and maintenance of the practices in keeping with applicable laws and regulations.

### **XIII. Cost-Share assistance reporting requirements (Sec.230.44)**

All eleven FLEP categories cost share practices will be reported annually through the Forest Service automated data system. Most categories will be reported in acres. FLEP 1 will be reported in number of plans developed and acres planned.

### **XIV. Application and Approval. (Sec. 230.42) Internal procedures are found in Appendix # 1.**

Applications will be taken at any MFS field office.

a). Service Foresters will be responsible for accurate completeness of the applications.

Applications # (2 - letter county abbreviation - fiscal year - consecutive numbers). Refer to appendix 5 for county letter coding. For example: WO- 03-01F is the first application in Worcester County in FY 03, QA-04-010F is the tenth application in Queen Anne County in FY 04. All agreements will end with an F to denote FLEP and eliminate possible confusion with WIP agreements.

SS# or Federal Tax # - this must be completed.

Program - check the FLEP option in the program box.

County - county in which the practice will occur.

Name, address, city, state, zip code, and phone number of applicant.

Estimated dates for starting and completing the practices.

Practice request – practice code description, acres, cost/acre and total cost; this is the cost share amount being applied for.

b). The landowner must sign the application in the appropriate space.

c). The service forester will forward the application to the Regional Forester for tracking and reporting purposes. The Regional Forester will forward applications to the Forest Stewardship Program Manager for processing in accordance with quarterly batching periods.

d). Upon approval a letter will be sent to the landowner with a copy to the forester. The forester will receive the original application for use upon completion of the practices.

Regional allocations will not be made. Initially applications will be taken on a first come first served, continuous basis until all the funds are obligated. This approach to fund distribution is subject to change pending approval by the State Forester and the SFSCC.

Applications will be taken for all approved practices and if the dedicated funds have not been obligated by July 1, 2003, they will be used to approve any practices on a first come first served basis.

The Service Forester will submit cost-share project applications giving specifications after determining the landowner has a Forest Stewardship Plan, determines if practice is needed and feasible, and if the practice is consistent with funding priorities.

Landowner applications will not be approved unless cost-share funds are available.

When the application is approved, the landowner and service forester will be given a copy of the application and informed the project can start.

Any landowner who carries out practices under FLEP shall be responsible for obtaining the authorities, rights, easements, or other approvals necessary to the performance and maintenance of the practices in keeping with applicable laws and regulations

#### **XV. Payment to Landowners (Sec. 230.42)**

(a) The landowner will have 12 months to complete a practice. If factors beyond the control of the landowner delay the practice completion, a 12-month extension can be granted. Practices not completed by the end of the contract period will be cancelled.

(b) Upon certification by the Service Forester, that the practice has been completed in accordance with specifications, the cost share will be calculated and dispersed to the landowner via a third party vendor. Details of this partnership will be delineated in a MOU. The MFS representatives shall have the right of access to the owner's property to inspect practices for the duration of the practice maintenance period.

c) Maximum Payment: Maximum: \$5,000 per year per owner (may be for several projects).

d) FLEP payments cannot exceed maximum amount of cost share of the actual costs incurred by a participating owner. Non-Federal program funds and other donated assistance may be used to supplement cost share under the program; however, the total of all funds and assistance shall not exceed 100 percent of the actual cost of practice implementation.

e) Partial payments will not be allowed in the Maryland FLEP.

f) Where performance actually rendered does not meet the minimum specifications of a practice due to factors beyond the landowner's control, the State Forester or designee may approve cost-share payment under one of the following conditions:

(1) The landowner repeats applications of components previously implemented or establishes additional eligible components under such terms and conditions as the MFS Representative may require, in which case, the State Forester needed to meet the objectives of the FSP / forest management plan; or

(2) The landowner establishes to the satisfaction of the MFS that:

a reasonable effort was made to meet the minimum requirements; and the practice, as performed, adequately meets the objectives of the landowner as described in the Forest Stewardship Plan.

g) In case of death or incompetence of any landowner, the State Forester shall approve cost-share to the successor if the successor agrees to maintain the practices for the duration of the required maintenance period.

h) Any landowner who may be entitled to any cost-share payment under this subpart may assign the right thereto, in whole or in part, under the following terms:

(1) Payments may be assigned only for performance of a Program practice.

(2) A payment that is made to a landowner may not be assigned to pay or secure any preexisting debt.

(3) Neither the United States, the Forest Service, the Secretary of Agriculture, the State Forester nor any disbursing agent shall be liable in any suit if payment is made to an assignor rather than to an assignee, and nothing in this section shall be construed to authorize any suit against the United States, the Forest Service, the Secretary, the State Forester or any disbursing agent if payment is not made to the assignee, or if payment is made to only one of several assignees.

i) No financial assistance or portion thereof due and owing any landowner shall be subject to any claim arising under State law by any creditor, except agencies of the United States Government.

#### **XVI. Cost share assistance – prohibited practices (Sec. 230.43)**

a) No financial assistance funds shall be paid for the following:

(1) Costs incurred before an application for cost share is approved; and

(2) No cost share shall be paid for repeating practices on the same site by the same landowner, which has been implemented under any other Federal, State, or local government programs, or private sector programs, except where such practices are repeated due to a failure of a prior practice without fault of the landowner.

b) No program funds shall be expended by a recipient for capital investments, capital improvements, purchase of land or any interest in land, or any interest in an endowment.

(1) Cost sharing is not eligible for government mandated programs such as the Forest Conservation Act or wetlands.

## **XVII. Recapture of Payment. (Sec. 230.45)**

a) If any owner, successor, or assignee uses any scheme or device to unjustly benefit from this program, the financial assistance funds shall be withheld or a refund of all or part of any program payments otherwise due or paid that person shall be secured. A scheme or device includes, but is not limited to, coercion, fraud or misrepresentation, false claims, or any business dissolution, reorganization, revival, or other legal mechanism designed for or having the effect of evading the requirements of this subpart.

b) If any owner or successor takes any action or fails to take action, which results in the destruction or impairment of a prescribed practice for the duration of the practice, financial assistance funds shall be withheld or a recapture of all or part of any program payments otherwise due or paid shall be secured based on the extent and effect of destruction and impairment.

c) If an owner sells, conveys, or otherwise loses control of lands, upon which there is a continuing obligation to maintain a practice, and the new owner does not agree to assume the responsibility for maintaining the practice, the owner who was originally obligated to maintain the practice shall be liable to reimburse the State for all cost share on such practices.

d) Nothing in this section requiring the withholding or refunding of financial assistance funds shall preclude any penalty or liability otherwise imposed by law.

e) Where the owner has received cost share for any practice that has been unsuccessful, due to factors beyond the owner's control, the MFS Representative may require that the practice be re-established and shall approve cost-share for such activity.

f) Any landowner, successor or assignee who is dissatisfied with any determination made under FLEP may request reconsideration by the State Forester and, if the matter is not resolved, by the responsible official. All requests for reconsideration shall be in writing and shall contain factual information explaining the basis for the request. All decisions on reconsideration must be issued in writing.

## **XVIII. Reconsideration. Sec. (230.46)**

Any owner, successor, or assignee who is dissatisfied with any determination made under the program may request reconsideration by the State Forester and, if the matter is still not resolved, by the USDA Forest Service Area Director. All requests for reconsideration shall be in writing and shall contain factual information explaining the basis for requesting reconsideration. All decisions upon reconsideration shall be issued in writing.

## Who Qualifies for FLEP Assistance

Refer to Maryland State Priority Plan, section XI

### FLEP Funding

A. Designated Counties: All counties are eligible for FLEP,

B. Allocation of FLEP Funds: FLEP practices have been ranked into HIGH, MEDIUM and LOW categories with funding levels established for each category and practice. The following table lists how practices were ranked, their respective funding levels as a percentage of the State total and the percentage of each category's funds targeted to specific practices:

<u>HIGH - 70%</u>	<u>MEDIUM - 20%</u>	<u>LOW - 10%</u>
FLEP 1 20%	* FLEP 3 45%	* FLEP 4 20%
* FLEP 2 50%	FLEP 7 5%	FLEP 9 35%
FLEP 6 20 %	FLEP 5 50%	FLEP 10 35%
FLEP 8 10 %		FLEP 11 10%

FLEP cost share practices are intended to compliment NRCS Environmental Quality Incentive Practices (EQIP) forestry cost share practices. Funding for practices with a (\*) will not be eligible for FLEP funding until EQIP funding has been exhausted and or terminated.

Following each quarterly batching period, applications will be sorted into HIGH, MEDIUM, and LOW categories by the project foresters, then into relative order within a category based on the above priorities and the following general criteria:

- Availability of Other Cost share Programs
- Historical Need
- Critical Need (special exception or extenuating circumstances)
- Geographic Distribution

Rankings will be compiled by the stewardship program manager and given to the SFSCC for review, approval and fund allocation.

C. Cost Share Rate: Landowners will be reimbursed at a percentage of average statewide costs for all practices and practice components as established by the State Stewardship Coordinating Committee. Payments will not exceed 75% of actual costs up to the established flat rates. **(See Appendix 4)**

D. Not to Exceed Rates: Not to exceed rates will be established for practice components.

E. FLEP Funding Limitation: The maximum payment limitation for FLEP is \$5,000 per landowner per year.

F. Partial Payments: Partial payments are not authorized.

### SIGNUPS AND BATCHING PERIODS

A. Practices will be reviewed on a quarterly basis by SFSCC; March, June, September, and December. County MFS Offices must have their FLEP applications batched and sent to the Regional Forester by the first of April, July, October and January. The Regional Foresters will send applications to the Forest Stewardship Program Supervisor by April 15, July 15, October 15, and January 15.

B. Counties will conduct a continuous signup for FLEP requests.

C. The forester will provide verification to MFS – HQ that:

- 1) Landowners have approved forest stewardship plan / management plan.
- 2) Landowners have applied for practices that are approved by the SFSCC and consistent with the landowner's Stewardship / Management plan.
- 3) Landowners have agreed to manage all their contiguous forest lands according to their Forest Stewardship Plan / Management Plan.

## APPLICATION PROCEDURES

- A. The landowner with forester guidance will complete application and submit to the respective MFS County Office in person. The Service Forester will make basic administrative eligibility determinations, such as land ownership criteria, minimum acres, and forest stewardship plan completed. Ineligible participants will be sent disapproval notices through the mail by MFS - HQ.
- B. The Service Forester returns a copy of the FLEP form to MFS - HQ office. Applications that are not approved are sent notices from MFS - HQ.
- C. High priority applications that are not approved because of lack of funds may be held over (deferred) for approval later if additional funds become available within the pre-determined time period. Medium and low priority applications will be disapproved if funds are insufficient.
- D. Approved applicants will be sent a letter by MFS - HQ stating that their application is approved. Implementation of the practice can start upon approval by the SFSCC and acknowledgement by MFS - HQ that funds are available.
- E. Copies of the FLEP form for approved applicants are returned to the Service Forester for performance certification.
- F. Participants complete the practice and return their receipts; labor statements and other practice cost documentation to Service Forester. Cost-share shall not exceed the cost share rate of actual costs up to the established flat rates.
- G. The Service Forester returns the FLEP application with certification that the practice has been implemented according to specifications. MFS - HQ then will initiate payment up to 75% of the actual cost up to the established flat rates.
- H. The Service Forester will consult with other resource specialists as necessary to determine practice specifications for practices involving wildlife habitat, water quality, natural heritage, threatened and endangered species, etc.

## PRIORITY PRACTICES

Practices which provide multiple resource benefits will receive highest priority for approval. The SFSCC may change the priority of a practice if it is a keystone to accomplishing a high priority practice, when there is agreement with the State Forester and appropriate resource specialists. (Fencing will be eligible only where necessary to protect another practice. Fencing will not be approved adjacent to roads or property boundary.)

## **FLEP Practices and Components in Maryland**

### **FLEP 1, LANDOWNER FOREST STEWARDSHIP PLAN DEVELOPMENT**

#### **IF the component is...**

Forest Stewardship Plan, new or revised

### **FLEP 2, REFORESTATION AND AFFORESTATION**

#### **IF the component is...**

Pine reforestation / afforestation including site preparation to include the following:

machine and hand planting, aerial and ground chemical spraying, shear blade and pile, drum chop, rootraking, discing, bedding, mowing, fireline construction, prescribe burning, brush cutting, pile and burn.

Hardwood on open land (hardwood planting will be done according to hardwood planting guidelines, i.e. mats & shelters and sod control)

Allowable cost for reforestation / afforestation:

Site preparation, tree shelters and weed barriers *for hardwood*, fencing - (to exclude cattle & deer from planted areas, except along boundaries and roads)

#### **Not Authorized:**

animal repellents

fertilizer/lime

the purchase or establishment of plant materials for orchard, ornamental, nursery, Christmas trees or entities principally engaged in the primary processing of forest products

practices that impair soil productivity

repeated prescribed burning on the same acreage

firebreaks, gates.

### **FLEP 3, FOREST STAND IMPROVEMENT**

#### **IF the component is...**

#### **All components for Softwoods & Hardwoods**

Pine release to include the following:

aerial and ground chemical spraying, mowing

Pre-commercial thinning of pine

Pre-commercial thinning of hardwoods

control of competition & undesirable species

fencing - (*to exclude cattle & deer from hardwoods, not adjacent to roads or boundaries*)

non-commercial thinning, TSI, etc.\*

*\*Note specifications for FLEP 3 below*

Repeated prescribed burning on the same acreage not to exceed 3 times in 10 years

#### **Not Authorized:**

improvement of orchard, ornamental, nursery, or Christmas trees improvement of stands owned by entities principally engaged in the primary processing of forest products mowing between planted trees or shrubs firebreaks, gates



SPECIFICATIONS FOR FLEP 3					
Hardwood Practices	Minimum Site Index	Stand Age	Minimum BA* Removed	Number of AGS/ac**	Remarks
1. REGENERATION Cut: Undesirable residual after the harvest by chemical or mechanical methods	60+	0-5 yrs. before or after cut	20 sq. ft.		Establish a silvicultural clear-cut removing or killing trees down to 2" diameter
2. Crop Tree Release	60+	12-30	-	30-100	30-100 crop trees/ac have at least 75% (3 sides) free to expand with nearest crown 10+ feet away.
3. Thinning	60+	30-60	20 sq. ft.	30-100	30-100 crop trees/acre released
4. Cull tree removal	60+	1-10	20 sq. ft.	30-100	Remove cull trees in multiple age stands to release 30+ crop trees.
* Basal Area, ** Acceptable Growing Stock					

#### FLEP 4, AGROFORESTRY IMPLEMENTATION

##### IF the component is...

plant material purchase & installation  
*(open land: hardwood trees & shrubs)*

Allowable expenses:  
site preparation, labor, planting stock, tree shelters, weed barriers, fencing (to exclude cattle & deer from hardwood), the control of competition or undesirable species, noncommercial thinning to renovate an existing hedgerow

##### Not Authorized:

the purchase or establishment of plant material for orchard, ornamental, nursery or Christmas trees, firebreaks, gates

#### FLEP 5, WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT AND WATERSHED PROTECTION

##### IF the component is...

All practices for conifers & hardwood  
plant material purchase & installation *(open land: conifers and or hardwood trees and shrubs)*

Allowable practices:  
site preparation, tree shelters, weed barriers, fencing -minimum 35' from stream - to exclude cattle from hardwood or habitat mgt.  
Areas not along roads or boundaries, control of competition & undesirable species, cross drainage on roads & trails (waterbars not authorized on roads),  
controlling surface water through reshaping, stream bank stabilization

##### Not Authorized:

road or trail construction or maintenance, riprap, gabions, gates, bridges, one that would directly or indirectly result in the loss of wetlands

one that would impair wetland or riparian functions & values

## FLEP 6, FISH AND WILDLIFE HABITAT IMPROVEMENT

### IF the component is...

All practices for hardwood only  
plant material purchase & installation (*open land: hardwood trees and shrubs*)

#### *Allowable practices:*

site preparation, tree shelters, weed barriers, fencing –minimum 35' from stream – to exclude cattle & deer from hardwood or habitat mgt. Areas not along roads or boundaries

fencing (*to exclude cattle & deer from hardwood or habitat management areas not along a road or boundaries*)

the construction & placement of habitat improvement & stocking structures

the modification of habitat for threatened & endangered aquatic species

All practices for hardwood only

Plant material purchase & installation (*open land: hardwood trees and shrubs*)

#### Allowable practices:

site preparation, tree shelters, weed barriers, fencing –minimum 35' from stream – to exclude cattle from hardwood or habitat mgt. Areas not along roads or boundaries

repeated prescribed burning on the same acreage  
(*not to exceed three times in 10 years*)

control of competition & undesirable species

noncommercial thinning

fencing

(*to exclude cattle & deer from hardwood or habitat mgt. Areas*)

creation of forest openings (opening to be less than 2 acres , less than 10 % of forest land and no open land within 1000 feet of open areas, including adjacent landowners and shall be between 50 and 100 feet wide)

Artificial cavities, nest boxes, roost poles or platforms

Wildlife corridor establishment

Creation of forest openings & food plots

wildlife water facilities

spring development

establishment of threatened & endangered species of flora

modification of habitat for threatened & endangered species of flora or fauna

### **Not Authorized:**

one that would directly or indirectly result in the loss of wetlands

one that would impair wetland or riparian functions & values

riprap, gabions, gates, existing food supply enhancement

the provision of spawning areas

one that would have an adverse effect on any threatened or endangered species

the enhancement of a commercial aquaculture operation

pond installation

the purchase of fish  
the purchase of fish food

#### **FLEP 7, FOREST HEALTH AND PROTECTION**

**IF the component is...**

Property line boundary marking and maintenance  
Control of invasive species

**Not authorized:**

Spraying for Gypsy Moth or other insects in residential areas.

#### **FLEP 8, INVASIVE SPECIES CONTROL**

**IF the component is...**

control of competition & undesirable species

**Not Authorized:**

One that would have an adverse effect on any threatened or endangered species; water facilities to benefit livestock; structure for human benefit; supplementing a “put & take” wildlife operation; orchard production; ornamental or nursery production; culverts; development of green tree reservoir; riprap; pond installation; firebreaks; gates

#### **FLEP 9, FIRE AND CATASTROPHIC RISK REDUCTION**

**IF the component is...**

Creating Defensible Space, removal of vegetation within 100 feet of structures.  
Hand tools chainsaws, brush cutters etc.  
Heavy mechanized equipment such as a Geo-Boy

Creating a firebreak requiring dozer use or a 4 wheel drive vehicle e.g. farm tractor with a fire plow

repeated prescribed burning on the same acreage  
(*not to exceed three times in 10 years*)

**Not Authorized:**

One that would have an adverse effect on any threatened or endangered species; water facilities to benefit livestock; structure for human benefit; supplementing a “put & take” wildlife operation; orchard production; ornamental or nursery production; culverts; development of green tree reservoir; riprap; pond installation; firebreaks; gates; dry hydrants.

#### **FLEP 10, FIRE AND CASTROPHIC EVENT REHABILITATION**

**IF the component is...**

Fire line stabilization to include hand seeding and installing straw bales as check dams

Stabilization of burned area which are critical erosion hazards

**Not Authorized:**

One that would have an adverse effect on any threatened or endangered species; water facilities to benefit livestock; structure for human benefit; supplementing a “put & take” wildlife operation; orchard production; ornamental or nursery production; culverts; development of green tree reservoir; riprap; pond installation; firebreaks; gates; dry hydrants.

#### **FLEP 11, SPECIAL PRACTICES**

**IF the component is...**

No special practices are authorized for 2003

FOREST LAND ENHANCEMENT (FLEP) OR WOODLAND INCENTIVES PROGRAM (WIP)  
 AGREEMENT/APPLICATION FOR COST SHARE AND PAYMENT  
 MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
 FOREST SERVICE

AGREEMENT # FLEP Agreements end in F	S.S.# OR F.I.D. #	WIP PRIORITY RATING	PROGRAM FLEP _____ WIP _____	AGREEMENT TYPE (Check One) Annual____ Long-term____	COUNTY
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**Landowner Information:**

**Name::** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone::** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date received at regional office:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_ **E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_ **SSN or Federal Tax ID #** \_\_\_\_\_

**City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **State::** \_\_\_\_\_ **ZIP:** \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

REQUEST FOR COST-SHARE LANDOWNER HAS FOREST STEWARDSHIP PLAN: YES\_\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_

(HQ to complete) PRACTICE START DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ (HQ to complete) PRACTICE COMPLETION DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

PRACTICE REQUEST					ACCOMPLISHED (Forester to Complete)			
PRACTICE CODE	PRACTICE DESCRIPTION	ACRES	Cost /share Cost /ACRE	TOTAL	ACRES	ACTUAL COST/ACRE	ACTUAL TOTAL COST	Cost share TOTAL Amt.
TOTAL =					TOTALS =			

APPLICANT'S CERTIFICATION: I request cost-share assistance under this program for those practices listed herein. I agree to install and maintain these practices under current regulations and guidelines on property that I hold currently under legal title. I certify that no other cost-share assistance, under this or any other program, has been requested or received for the sites specified in this agreement for FLEP funding, I certify that I have a FSP / Management Plan.

SIGNATURE OF LANDOWNER: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**Landowner signature denotes they have READ and agree to the TERMS OF AGREEMENT listed on the back of this application.**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

DNR SERVICE FORESTER recommended signature line:

I (approve\_\_\_\_ / disapprove\_\_\_\_) this cost share-share request. Approval shall be valid until \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ In the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE OF STATE FORESTER: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

MD DNR-FOREST SERVICE FORESTER CERTIFICATION: I have inspected the above-completed practices and find that they have

(been \_\_\_\_/not been\_\_\_\_) satisfactorily completed. I (do\_\_\_\_/do not \_\_\_\_) recommend cost-share payment.

Payment should be in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_, not to exceed the cost/acre rate specified under practice request.

DNR SERVICE FORESTER SIGNATURE:\_\_\_\_\_ LICENSE NUMBER:\_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

APPROVAL OF PAYMENT: I \_\_\_\_\_, STATE FORESTER (approve\_\_\_\_/disapprove\_\_\_\_) cost-share payment.

Payment shall be in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to the above named applicant. DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **TERMS OF AGREEMENT Woodland Incentive Program (WIP)**

1. Forestry practice means any accepted silvicultural and reforestation activity approved by a Licensed Forester.
2. Any individual group or corporation is eligible that owns private woodland consisting of 10 to 500 contiguous acres capable of producing 20 cubic feet of wood per acre per year and when appropriate, has the potential of being harvested for forest products.
3. Any corporation or subsidiary of a corporation that manufactures forest products or provides utility services is not eligible, nor is any individual, group or corporation that has received federal cost-share assistance for like practices(s) on the same parcel, stand or tract in the 5 year preceding this application or presently has an application submitted for like practice(s) for the parcel, stand or tract, nor has received cost-share assistance from this program for the same practice(s) on the same parcel, stand or tract within the last 15 years.
4. An eligible landowner shall:
  - a. Provide the Department a plan approved by a Licensed Forester and prepared for the purpose of accomplishing forestry practices.
  - b. Agree to use the cost-share assistance for continued forest improvement and growth of harvestable forest products on a long-term basis.
  - c. Agree to permit a representative of the Department to enter the stand or tract to inspect for program compliance and determine the effectiveness of the practice during normal hours of business for a period not to exceed 15 years after completion.
  - d. Agree to accept the cost-share payment not to exceed 50 percent of actual expenses or of flat rate allowance, which ever is lesser.
  - e. Agree to hold the Department harmless from liability for occurrences arising during inspection by a representative of the Department on official business.
5. The Department shall:
  - a. Notify each applicant of approval or disapproval within 30 calendar days after expiration of the enrollment period.
  - b. Make payment to eligible landowners with a reasonable time after receipt of expense documents, inspection and approval of practice.
6. A landowner is not eligible for more than \$5,000 in a calendar year or \$15,000.00 in any 3-year period for all approved practices.

#### **TERMS OF AGREEMENT Forest Land Enhancement Program (FLEP)**

1. Forest Land Enhancement Program practice, means any accepted silvicultural and reforestation activity delineated in the State Priority Plan.
2. An owner of non-industrial private forest land or a lease holder is eligible, who controls the land for the minimum length of time for any practice to be established. Corporations whose stock is publicly traded or owners principally engaged in the processing of wood products are not eligible.
3. Landowners must have at least five acres of non-industrial private forest land in order to qualify. Approved FLEP practices must be at least one acre in size.
4. An eligible landowner shall:
  - a. Provide the Department with an approved plan prepared for the purpose of accomplishing forestry practices.
  - b. Agree to Maintain FLEP practices for a minimum period of 10 years. Failure to do so will require repayment to the Maryland DNR Forest Service of all FLEP cost share funds received, plus a 10% penalty. If property is sold, seller agrees to inform buyer of any remaining maintenance obligations resulting of receipt of FLEP cost share funding.
  - c. Agree to permit a representative of the Department to enter the stand or tract to inspect for program compliance and determine the effectiveness of the practice during normal hours of business for a period not to exceed 10 years after completion.
  - d. Complete each practice within 12 months from the date of approval by the State Forester. A twelve-month extension may be granted for factors beyond the control of the landowner. Practices not completed by the end of the contract period will be canceled.

**e. Agree to hold the Department harmless from liability for occurrences arising during inspection by a representative of the Department on official business.**

5. The Department shall:

**a. Notify each applicant of approval or disapproval within 30 calendar days after expiration of the enrollment period.**

**b. Make payment to eligible landowners within a reasonable time after receipt of expense documents, inspection and approval of practice.**

6. A landowner is not eligible for more than \$5,000 in a calendar year or \$25,000.00 aggregate amount for all approved practices through 2007. I have read and agree to the above TERMS OF AGREEMENT for either the Forest Land Enhancement or Woodland Incentives Program, whichever is applicable.

## FLEP

### Cost-Share Incentives

Practice code		<u>MAX TOTAL COST</u>	<u>MAX. C/S RATE</u>	<u>C/S %</u>
	<u>Stewardship Plan Development</u>	\$350.00 + \$8.00 / ac.	\$262.50 + \$6.00 /ac.	75
101	New Plan	“	“	
102	Revised Plan	“	“	
	<u>Reforestation / Afforestation</u>			
201	Coniferous	Current state nursery price	50% of price	50
203	Hardwoods	“	“	50
204	Hand Planting	\$200/ac.	\$100/ac.	50
205	Machine Planting	\$150/ac.	\$75/ac.	50
206	Tree Shelters (100/acre)	\$400/ac.	\$200/ac.	50
<i>The Number of shelters recommended per acre varies based on deer population and species recommended. The cost is \$4.00 per shelter with a minimum of 100 shelters per acre. Recommend cost sharing at higher number of tree shelters per acre as recommended by the forester on a case by case basis up to say 400 per acre.</i>				
	<u>Site Preparation</u>			
207	Herbicide Spraying – aerial	\$100/ac.	\$50/ac.	50
208	Herbicide Spraying – ground	\$100/ac.	\$50/ac.	50
209	Chem. Spray – ground strips or spots	\$50/ac.	\$25/ac.	50
210	Shear blade and pile	\$250/ac.	\$125/ac.	50
211	Drum chop	\$150/ac.	\$75/ac.	50
212	Rootraking	\$190/ac.	\$95/ac.	50
213	Discing	\$80/ac.	\$40./ac.	50
214	Bedding	\$34/ac.	\$17/ac.	50
215	Mowing	\$50/ac.	\$25/ac.	50
216	Fencing	2.50/ft.	\$1.25/ft.	50
217	Fire line Construction (hand line)	\$10/chain (66’)	\$5/chain	50
218	“ (dozer line)	\$45/dozer hr.	\$22.50 /dozer hr.	50
219	Prescribed Burning (1 - 15 ac.)	\$25/hr/per. (FS personnel)	\$12.50/hr/per	50
220	Prescribed Burning (16+ ac.)	\$45/ac.	\$22.50/ac.	50
221	Brush cutting	\$90/ac.	\$45/ac.	50
222	Pile & burn / understory burns (1 to 15 ac.)	\$25/hr/per.	\$12.50/hr/per.	50
223	“ (> 15 ac.)	\$15/ac.	\$7.50/ac.	50
	<u>Forest Stand Improvement</u>			
301	Herbicide Spraying – aerial	\$100/ac.	\$50/ac.	50
302	Herbicide Spraying – ground	\$100/ac.	\$50/ac.	50
303	Chem. Spray – ground strips or spots	\$50/ac.	\$25/ac.	50
304	Frill and Herbicide Treatment	\$200/ac.	\$100/ac.	50
305	Crop Tree Release	\$200/ac.	\$100/ac.	50
306	Understory Burning	\$70/ac.	\$35/ac.	50
307	Non-Commercial TSI	\$150/ac.	\$75/ac.	50
308	Pruning, 110/ac. (first 17’)	\$180/ac.	\$90/ac.	50
309	Pruning, 110/ac. (first 9’)	\$80/ac.	\$40/ac.	50
	<u>Agroforestry</u>			
401	Seedlings	Current State nursery price	50% of price	50
402	Hand planting	\$200/ac.	\$100/ac.	50
403	Machine planting	\$150/ca.	\$75/ac.	50
404	Tree shelters	\$400/ac.	\$200/ac.	50
405	Fencing	\$2.50/ft.	\$1.25/ft.	50
406	Weed control	\$150/ac.	\$75/ac.	50
407	Non-commercial TSI	\$150ac.	\$75/ac.	50





<u>Water Quality Improvement &amp; Watershed Protection</u>				
501	Pine seedlings	Current State nursery price	50% of price	50
502	Hardwood seedlings	“ “ “ “	“ “ “	50
503	Hand planting	\$200/ac.	\$100/ac.	50
504	Machine planting	\$150/ac.	\$75/ac.	50
505	Site preparation	refer to 200 practice series on previous page	50% of cost	50
506	Tree shelters	\$400/ac.	\$200/ac.	50
507	Fencing	\$2.50/ft.	\$1.25/ft.	50
508	Weed control	\$150/ac.	\$75/ac.	50
509	Cross drainage on roads trails, culverts and diversion ditches	\$10 each	\$5 each	50
510	Reshape surface to control water flow	\$100/ac.	\$50/ac.	50
511	Stream bank stabilization	\$12/ft.	\$6/ft.	50
<u>Fish and Wildlife Habitat Improvement</u>				
601	Pine Seedlings	Current State nursery price	50% of price	50
602	Hardwood seedlings	“ “ “ “	“ “ “	50
603	Hand planting	\$200/ac.	\$100/ac.	50
604	Machine planting	\$150/ac.	\$75/ac.	50
605	Site preparation	refer to 200 practice series on previous page	50% of cost	50
606	Tree shelters	\$400/ac.	\$200/ac.	50
607	Fencing	\$2.50/ft.	\$1.25/ft.	50
608	Construction & replacement of habitat improvement & stocking structures	\$250/ac.	\$125/ac.	50
609	Modification of habitat for T & E aquatic species	\$200/ac.	\$100/ac.	50
610	Prescribed burning (includes warm & cool season grasses)	refer to 219 & 220		50
611	Non-commercial TSI	\$150/ac.	\$75/ac.	50
612	Creation of forest openings and food plots	\$225/ac.	\$112.50/ac.	50
613	Wildlife watering facilities	\$225 each	\$112.50 each	50
614	Wildlife corridor establishment	\$800/ac.	\$400/ac.	50
615	Artificial cavities, nest boxes, roost poles or platforms	\$100/structure	\$50/structure	50
616	Spring development	\$225 each	\$112.50 each	50
617	Establishment of T & E species of flora	\$225/ac.	\$112.50/ac.	50
618	Modification of habitat for T & E species of flora & fauna	\$50/ac.	\$25/ac.	50
<u>Forest Health and Protection</u>				
701	Property line boundary marking & maintenance	\$4/chain	\$2/chain	50
<u>Invasive Species Control</u>				
801	Control of competition & undesirable species	\$150/ac.	\$75/ac.	50
<u>Fire &amp; Catastrophic Risk reduction</u>				
Removal of vegetation within 100 ft. of structures				
901	Hand tools, chainsaws, brush cutters	\$100/ac.	\$50/ac.	50
902	Heavy mechanized equipment such as: Geo-Boy	\$300/ac.	\$150/ac.	50
903	Creating firebreaks with heavy	\$5/ft.	\$2.50/ft.	50

904	Equipment Repeated prescribed burning on same acreage	\$16/ac.	\$8/ac.	50
	<u>Fire &amp; Catastrophic Event Rehabilitation</u>			
1001	Fire line stabilization	\$2/ft.	\$1/ft.	50
1002	Stabilization of burned areas which are critical erosion hazards	\$75/ac.	\$37.50/ac.	50
	<u>Special Practices</u>			
	No practices currently identified			

Landowner Labor Rate = \$10/hour

<u>County</u>	<u>Designation</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Designation</u>
Allegany	AL	Prince George's	PG
Anne Arundel	AA	Queen Anne's	QA
Baltimore	BA	Somerset	SO
Baltimore City	BC	St. Mary's	SM
Calvert	CV	Talbot	TA
Charles	CH	Washington	WA
Caroline	CA	Wicomico	WI
Carroll	CR	Worcester	WO
Cecil	CE		
Dorchester	DO		
Frederick	FR		
Garrett	GR		
Harford	HA		
Howard	HO		
Kent	KE		
Montgomery	MO		

Civil Rights Outreach Plan  
For the Proposed Final Rule  
Forest Lands Enhancement Program  
State of Maryland

DNR- Forest Service  
June 25,2003

Targeted Audience: Hispanic, African-American, females and disabled Non-industrial Private Forestry Landowners (NIPF) of Maryland

Purpose: The purpose of this outreach plan is to educate minority, underserved and limited resources NIFP landowners on the contents of the final rule Forest Lands Enhancement Program to ensure effective participation in the referendum process.

Actions: Contact will be made with the ADA and EEO staff specialists in MD-DNR to identify organizations that comprise members of the above-delineated targeted audiences. The following measures will be taken to reach these populations:

FLEP program descriptions will be posted on our web site

A feature article will be published in the MD DNR magazine "The Natural Resource."

Articles will be submitted for publishing in newsletters and other appropriate outreach efforts that focus on targeted audiences.

Inner city high school age students will be approached to participate in our Forestry Conservation Awareness Week summer program.

FLEP presentations will be given at the Maryland Tree Farm quarterly meetings, Mid Atlantic Forest Stewardship Seminar, and other venues as requested with emphasis being given to requests by minority and disabled oriented organizations.

**MARYLAND DNR FOREST SERVICE**  
**FOREST STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM**  
**STRATEGIC PLAN**  
**FY2002-2006**

Prepared By:

The Maryland DNR – Forest Service with input and assistance from

The Maryland Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee

## INTRODUCTION

### **FOREST STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM**

Forest Stewardship is the application of economic and ecological principles to manage forest land. The purpose of the program is to help non-industrial forest landowners achieve their land management objectives and leave the land and its resources in better condition for future generations.

### **FOREST STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM GOALS**

1. To manage the forest environment for all its resource benefits including: water quality, wildlife, species and habitat diversity, recreation, timber, aesthetics and air quality.
2. To broaden the range of forest resource conservation options and multi-agency services available to private landowners
3. To encourage forest stewardship planning prior to implementation of any resource activity.
4. To educate the citizens of Maryland about the values of all forest resources and their management.
5. To encourage private landowners to practice forest stewardship and to leave the land and its resources in better condition for future generations.

Maryland will use the following strategies to help achieve these program goals: education and publicity, professional training and cross training, technical and financial assistance, committee diversity, and partnership development.

## MARYLAND FOREST STEWARDSHIP COORDINATING COMMITTEE

### **BACKGROUND**

A Maryland Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee (MFSCC) was created and has functioned under the guidelines set forth by the United States Department of Agriculture - Forest Service and the Maryland State Forester. The committee includes representatives from the following agencies, groups and organizations:

- \* USDA - Forest Service (USFS)
- \* Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- \* Farm Service Agency (FSA)
- \* Maryland Cooperative Extension (MCE)
- \* local government
- \* soil and water conservation districts
- \* consulting foresters
- \* environmental organizations
- \* forest products industry
- \* forest landowners
- \* land trust organizations
- \* conservation agencies
- \* state fish and wildlife agencies

Other groups may be added by the Maryland State Forester when deemed necessary. The Maryland State Forester or their representative will chair the MFSCC.

### **ROLES AND STRUCTURE**

The MFSCC works in partnership as an ad hoc advisory committee to the Maryland State Forester. The committee will provide assistance and recommendations concerning the direction, development, implementation and monitoring of the Forest Stewardship Program, the Forest Land Enhancement Program (FLEP), the Forest Legacy Program (FLP), the Maryland Forest Stewardship Plan and other programs as requested by the Maryland State Forester.

Recommendations will be considered and made by the Committee related to prioritization of funding needs. If funds are made available for cooperative projects, the Committee will review, rank and recommend proposals to the Maryland State Forester who will make the final approval.

### **SFSCC SUBCOMMITTEES**

#### **Forest Land Enhancement Program Subcommittee**

The FLEP subcommittee, composed of three to five members, will review FLEP applications on a periodic basis and allocate funds according to the priorities set by the full committee. They will also review and propose any changes in rates or practices on an annual basis.

#### **Forest Legacy Subcommittee**

The Forest Legacy subcommittee will review applications and make recommendations to the full committee regarding the suitability of parcels of land for inclusion in the Forest Legacy Program. They will also review, on an annual basis, the ranking criteria and the activity level of each Forest Legacy Area. If necessary, they will recommend changes to the full committee.

#### **Environmental Quality Incentives Program Subcommittee**

The EQIP subcommittee will explore ways to integrate delivery of EQIP to the greatest extent possible for NIPFLO's including the possibility of contracting with third party vendors. The committee will work with the State Forester in fostering support with NRCS to establish a Forestry Sub-committee to the State Technical Committee.

#### **Conservation Education Subcommittee**

This subcommittee will establish criteria for evaluating proposals, recommend funding levels for projects, propose an accomplishment tracking method that complies with the spirit of the FLEP program final rule guidelines and identify activities and their outcomes for the State Priority Plan.

# FOREST RESOURCE ISSUES

## LOSS OF FOREST LAND

When the European Colonists arrived in the Chesapeake Bay Area, they found that the land was about 95 percent forested. The early settlers used the forest for their own survival such as fuel wood and homes. In addition the forests provided many resources such as ship masts, planking and tanning bark, which could be exported and sold. The colonists also cleared the forests for their settlements, fields and pastures. Later, forests were harvested by the charcoaling industry and for railroad ties and pilings to accommodate the industrial era. Most of the colonial forests were harvested and the forests today are a regrowth, which occurred after the Civil War and the Great Depression.

According to the U.S. Forest Service fifth statewide inventory of Maryland's forest resource conducted in 1999, Maryland is 41 percent forested with 2.5658 million acres of forest lands. Ninety percent of the forest land is classified timberland or commercial forest lands. Sawtimber is on 71 percent of the lands and 9.5 percent are seedling or sapling stands. As the forest matures, regenerating management practices become more viable. Oak/hickory is the dominant forest-type group, which is 59 percent of the forest land. Maryland's hardwoods include yellow-poplar red and white oaks, sweetgum, blackgum, black cherry, sugar maple, ash and black walnut, which are high quality hardwoods producing veneer for both domestic use and export.

In trying to maintain a forest base, one of the critical factors is fragmentation and parcelization. Seventy-six (76%) of the forest land in Maryland is privately owned by 130,600 individuals and corporations. Seventy-five percent of these private owners control woodlots of fewer than 10 acres. These figures represent approximately 30% increases over data from only ten years before. Individual and joint ownerships dominate with 88% of the ownerships and 72% of the privately owned acreage. In general, age of forest landowners is increasing slightly in the 45-64 year old category and increasing dramatically for those over 65 years. The change in acreage owned is more dramatic with increases only in the 65 year old and greater as our population ages. This parcelization of the landscape into smaller ownerships has resulted in more fragmentation of the forest resource as larger number of landowners with diverse objectives implement management practices. Increasing fragmentation of the forest resource into smaller areas can result in increased problems with invasive species, a reduction in the habitat of forest interior birds and other impacts. The future of Maryland forest will depend on the forest management decisions made by private landowners.

These figures clearly indicate a forest that is owned in smaller parcels by more and older people. This woodland ownership fragmentation changes several factors in the overall timber base for Maryland. The smaller woodland owners often have a different objective for their forest land than timber production. Only 3% of the landowners gave "Timber Production" as their primary reason for owning forest land. Many of the owners are holding the land for aesthetic or fish and wildlife objectives (18% as a primary reason). Although many of them will harvest at some time, the vast number of small landowners with varying objectives, make long term timber management of Maryland's forest resources on a regional or watershed basis difficult. The higher percentage of older landowners also increases the chances for further parcelization of their land as estates are settled after their death. Another important issue is the impact of short land tenure on forest management decisions. On average, ownership of forest properties change hands every 12 years, increasing the chance that short-term forest harvest decisions can be a detriment to long term forest stewardship considerations.

Many of the county zoning laws stress large lot zoning in critical areas such as riparian zones. With forest land owners having different objectives than timber production, the large lots may never be commercially harvested. From an environmental standpoint these lots may have high values for air and water quality as well as animal and plant habitats. Also, a larger percentage of forest owners may value the aesthetic enjoyment of the woodlands over an economic return. As more urban oriented people own forest land, they may not understand the economic or environmental values of their forests or the need for long-term forest management. Many of these owners will only reside for short periods of time in a given location.

Forest management for both timber production and environmental values such as watershed protection, air quality and habitat protection becomes much more difficult as parcelization and fragmentation occurs. As foresters work with the new owners of the smaller forest land parcels, they may find that these owners may be more receptive to establish other environmental goals for their forest land instead of the traditional timber production goals.



Several programs are in place to help retain forest land and slow the rate of fragmentation. The Forest Legacy Program was approved for Maryland in 1996. Seven areas of the state have been identified as Forest Legacy Areas and landowners continue to apply for inclusion in the program. Easements on three parcels have been acquired and funding has been secured for four additional parcels. A new state program, the Rural Legacy Program, was created in 1997 along the lines of the Forest Legacy Program and will seek to acquire perpetual easements on agricultural as well as forest land. Maryland also has an excellent farmland preservation program, which can accept forest land. . Programs such as Agricultural Preservation and donated conservation easements through the Maryland Environmental Trust, which partners with many local land trusts, have been successful in securing conservation easements on forestland. Funding is the key issue for these programs as land acquisition is expensive and can impact very limited acreage.

## **WATER QUALITY**

In Maryland, the responsibility for protecting soil and water resources during forest harvest operations is shared among a number of organizations. Several state and local government agencies and the forest industry each play a role in ensuring that BMP requirements are met on all forest harvest operations in the state. The Department of the Environment (MDE) has regulatory authority for enforcing sediment and erosion control plans on logging operations; the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) provides technical and educational training to forest products operators and forest landowners; the local Soil Conservation Districts (SCD) review and approve sediment and erosion control plans; and finally, the forest products operators implement the sediment and erosion control plans based on Maryland's forestry BMP requirements.

A survey has been conducted to determine the effectiveness of forestry BMP's and how well they have been implemented. Overall compliance was calculated to be 82%, which is considered to be in the Good category. While there were some regional differences, the results largely indicate a positive trend towards good pre-planning, layout and design. Although non-point source runoff from forest harvest operations has the potential for causing sediment and nutrient loadings to water systems throughout the state, proper use of BMP's (as shown by the survey) will keep the impact to minimal levels.

Water quality can also be improved through the establishment and maintenance of riparian forest buffers. Studies have shown that approximately 50 - 60% of Maryland's 17,000 miles of "blue-line" streams lack adequate (100 feet) buffers. Maryland has made the establishment of riparian forest buffers a priority activity. Maryland is a participant in the Chesapeake Bay Commission Harrisburg Agreement and is committed to planting 600 miles of riparian forest buffer by the year 2010. The first five years have been so successful that the 600 mile goal has been achieved. This is due in large part to the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). A new goal of 1,200 miles by 2010 has been established.

## **RARE, THREATENED and ENDANGERED SPECIES**

Maryland has an extensive data collection on rare, threatened and endangered species and has developed a publication listing and describing these species. Since the majority of Maryland's forest land is privately owned, it is difficult to implement conservation practices to prevent the potentially fatal alteration of an individual's species' habitat. Foresters and landowners need to have a better understanding of endangered species issues. Foresters must have the access to information about species location and habitat requirements when preparing a landowner stewardship plan. This knowledge will help them to work with landowners and ecologists to develop a plan that meets the landowner's needs while minimizing the impacts on the rare, threatened or endangered species.

## **TECHNICAL/FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR LANDOWNERS**

The majority of forest landowners have little knowledge of what resources are available to help them manage their forest land. Additional technical assistance is needed to help the landowner understand what they have, determine their goals and how they can achieve those goals. This assistance can be in many forms - federal, state and local government agencies, private sector natural resource management professionals or peer volunteers.

Financial assistance to help landowners implement recommended land management practices is available in a variety of types. Cost-share reimbursement programs can provide a limited number of landowners with a direct cash payment to cover some of the costs of conducting forest stewardship practices. These programs are usually government funded and have declining or stable budgets. Property tax programs are the most widely available to landowners. Participation in these programs requires following a forest stewardship plan

(or a similar land management plan) to receive a reduced and/or frozen assessment.

### **CONTROL OF EXOTIC/INVASIVE SPECIES**

A number of exotic or invasive species such as ailanthus, multiflora rose, mile-a minute, Japanese honeysuckle and kudzu are present in Maryland. The abundance and rapid growth of these species make them difficult and costly to control. Precious time and money are spent removing or controlling these species that could have been used to conduct more productive forest stewardship practices.

As we move to an ecosystem-based approach to forest management, the use of non-native species is being questioned. Work must be done to determine which native species are available to replace the management benefits offered by the non-natives. Invasive species have already been phased out as a recommendation in stewardship plans and are no longer produced at the Ayton Nursery.

## **CONSERVATION EDUCATION FOR LANDOWNERS**

Surveys of forest landowners continue to show that when given a preference between technical, financial, or educational assistance, they value education. The diversity of forest landowner objectives and parcel size requires different educational approaches. The approach used to reach small owners would be different than those for larger landowners. The use of newsletters, volunteer training, local woodland owner associations, publications and other outreach methods need to be tailored to the audience. Forest landowners are increasing their use of the Internet and our educational delivery must keep pace with technological advances.

## **STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE NON-INDUSTRIAL PRIVATE FOREST MANAGEMENT (NIPF)**

The Forest Stewardship Program, funded by federal and state sources, is intended to complement existing programs and create new efforts to improve the management of NIPF lands. To do so requires a combination of technical assistance, financial incentives and information and education efforts. Technical assistance is defined as professional natural resource management being provided in a one-on-one setting. The Forest Land Enhancement Program (FLEP) and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) are Federal programs funded in the FY 2002 Farm Bill. Financial incentives are federal or state cost-share programs and income or property tax reduction programs. Information and education efforts include publications, tours, conferences, exhibits and demonstration areas designed to impart knowledge and influence public attitudes.

Financial assistance is projected to receive 65% of the State's FLEP appropriation. Technical assistance will receive approximately 20% of the Forest Stewardship funds received by the State. The other 15% will be targeted to information and education efforts. More specific strategies are as follows:

### **TECHNICAL/FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

The delivery of professional natural resource management advice in a one-on-one setting is essential to accomplishing successful resource management activities. Coordination and cooperation between agencies and partners continues to be an objective of the program. Efforts continue to implement one delivery system for landowner management plans prepared by agencies within the Department. A concerted effort will be made to use resource management professionals from the private sector in a more coordinated and effective manner.

## **FINANCIAL INCENTIVES**

Financial incentives such as cost-share, tax abatement and easement programs help make owning and managing forest land a little easier. We must continue to effectively use our existing programs and seek out new programs and additional sources of funds. Programs such as the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and Rural Legacy can help stem the loss of forest land and stretch the dollars in other programs.

### **EDUCATION AND PUBLICITY**

The promotion of Forest Stewardship and its benefits to the environment remain an important part of the program. Traditional activities such as brochures, publications, seminars and demonstration areas remain as key elements of our information and education efforts. We will also seek out new and innovative ways to reach groups and members of the public we have not targeted in the past. Future approaches will include updating our Forest Stewardship web site that results in easier access of information for forest landowners and the possible promotion of new internet-based educational methods.

## **PROFESSIONAL TRAINING/CROSS TRAINING**

Training natural resource professionals is a never-ending process. We will strive to provide our personnel and our educational partners with the latest information and technologies available. We will also encourage cross training between resource management disciplines. A better understanding of issues and principles in other disciplines can lead to better understanding, better cooperation and a more efficient delivery system.

## **COMMITTEE DIVERSITY**

The MFSCC has been composed of the core group of agencies and groups as specified in the U.S. Forest Service guidelines since its inception. In an effort to broaden diversity and bring different viewpoints and perspectives to committee discussions, we will invite other organizations with natural resource interests to participate on the Committee.

## **PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

Opportunities exist for the Committee to work with member organizations and others on a variety of activities or projects that promote forest stewardship. We have taken advantage of many of these opportunities but many more are still waiting to be discovered. We must identify these opportunities and establish and / or expand partnerships to take advantage of them.

## **DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES GOALS**

1. Ensure sustainable populations of living resources and aquatic habitat in the main stem of the Chesapeake Bay, tidal tributaries and Coastal Bays.
2. Healthy Maryland watershed lands, streams and non-tidal rivers.
3. A natural resource stewardship ethic for Marylanders.
4. Vibrant local communities in balance with natural systems.
5. Establish a protected statewide network of ecologically valuable private and public lands (Green Infrastructure).
6. Provide for the enjoyment of diverse outdoor recreation opportunities for Maryland citizens and visitors.
7. Ensure a diverse, well-supported, cooperative and informed workforce.
8. Assure efficient and effective operations.

## **U.S. FOREST SERVICE LANDOWNER ASSISTANCE GOALS**

1. Sustaining a Productive Land Base
2. Improving Forest Management
3. Improving Forest Resource Monitoring and Assessment
4. Raising Awareness
5. Coordinating Delivery of Landowner Assistance Programs

# FIVE-YEAR PROGRAM

The Forest Stewardship Program has set the following goals for its activities over the five-year period from FY2002 through FY2006. Implementation of these action items will help achieve successful implementation of these goals and objectives which, in turn, will help meet the overall goals of the Forest Stewardship Program, the United States Forest Service Landowner Assistance Programs and the Department of Natural Resources.

Goal 1: Increase awareness and understanding of Forest Stewardship among our client base.

## *DNR Goals:*

A natural resource stewardship ethic for Marylanders

## *USFS Landowner Assistance Goals:*

Awareness

Objective 1 - seek out and develop partnerships with non-government conservation organizations

Action items:

1. Meet with organizations with similar land stewardship objectives to discuss opportunities to provide Forest Stewardship Program information to their members or partners. Examples are: Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Ducks Unlimited, Trust for Public Lands, local land trusts, Maryland Environmental Trust, Maryland Forest Association, Association of Forest Industries, Maryland Tree Farm System, Farm Bureau, Local Watershed Associations etc.
2. Establish stewardship demonstration areas in cooperation with these partners.

Objective 2 - focus education efforts with organizations listed above plus schools, governmental organizations, local decision makers and legislators (via partners)

Action items:

1. Refine existing information or develop new material as necessary to create a dynamic and interactive set of lesson plans that are age and knowledge level appropriate.
2. Work with Project Learning Tree (PLT) to include the stewardship message
3. Add a school teacher/educator to the SFSCC.
4. Work with the Maryland Cooperative Extension to better coordinate educational outreach opportunities for forest landowners.

Goal 2: Encourage the management of the forest for all its values to ensure a sustainable productive and economically viable forest land base.

## *DNR Goals:*

Healthy Maryland watershed lands, streams and non-tidal rivers.

A natural resource stewardship ethic for Marylanders.

Vibrant local communities in balance with natural systems

## *USFS Landowner Assistance Goals:*

Improving Forest Management

Sustaining a productive forest land base emphasizing economic viability of privately owned forestland.

Improve educational outreach opportunities for landowners

Objective 1 - Improve financial assistance opportunities for landowners

Action items:

1. Work with external partners to press for additional funds for existing cost-share programs or to develop new ones to enable landowners to accomplish on-the-ground forest stewardship activities.
2. Encourage partners to work with elected officials to enact more favorable income and property tax status for forest ownership and management
3. Utilize FLEP funds on private-non-industrial forest land. Rates and practices set by MFSCC and State Forester.
4. Coordinate with NRCS and the State Technical Committee to identify practices and guidelines for use

of EQIP funds for forest stewardship activities on non-industrial private forest land.  
Objective 2 - improve technical assistance opportunities for landowners

Action items:

1. Encourage more consulting foresters to prepare forest management plans using Forest Stewardship guidelines
2. Provide landowners with a list of consulting foresters and an explanation of their services
3. Develop and distribute a list of wildlife consultants to better meet the wildlife habitat management desires of landowners
4. Develop and distribute a list of aquatic resource consultants for landowners with streams and ponds on their property.

Objective 3 - ensure an adequate supply of seedlings to support all reforestation, afforestation and riparian buffer planting efforts.

Action items:

1. Work with partners such as the Potomac Watershed Partnership, Growing Native and others to ensure sufficient seed is collected each year to enable the John S. Ayton Nursery to meet the projected needs
2. Identify potential native replacements (with adequate seed sources) for non-native species currently in production.

*DNR Goals:*

Healthy Maryland watershed lands, streams and non-tidal rivers.  
A natural resource stewardship ethic for Marylanders.  
Vibrant local communities in balance with natural systems.  
Ensure a diverse, well-supported, cooperative and informed workforce.  
Assure efficient and effective operations.

*USFS Landowner Assistance Goals:*

Improving Forest Management  
Sustaining a Productive Forest Land Base  
Coordinating Delivery of Assistance Programs

Objective 1 - develop a program of professional cross training among resource managers

Action items:

1. Develop a list of issues/subjects foresters should be more familiar with in order to provide better service and a

Goal: 3 Provide coordinated land management assistance to Maryland's forest landowners.

- higher quality stewardship plan to the landowners
2. Ask sister agencies for their input on forestry related topics that would be useful for their personnel.
3. Develop curricula, lesson plans and cadre of instructors to carry out the program
4. Work with natural resource organizations such as MCE and The Society of American Foresters and others to develop professional training programs on relevant topics.

Objective 2 - develop one standard delivery system for landowner management plans for the Department

Action items:

1. Coordinate with all DNR agencies that provide landowner land management assistance.
2. Develop training sessions on: better plan preparation, communication (written and verbal) skills, etc.
3. Partner with existing landowner assistance groups to coordinate and blend services to landowners.

Goal 4: Increase landowner participation in Forest Stewardship programs.

*DNR Goals:*

Healthy Maryland watershed lands, streams and non-tidal rivers.  
A natural resource stewardship ethic for Marylanders.  
Vibrant local communities in balance with natural systems.

*USFS Landowner Assistance Goals:*

Awareness

Improving Forest Management  
Sustaining a Productive Forest Land Base

Objective 1 - increase participation of small woodlot owners

Action items:

1. Develop a training program to enable landowners to evaluate their own forest land and prepare a basic stewardship plan.

Objective 2 - increase number of foresters and natural resource management professionals available to offer technical assistance.

Action items:

1. Support the recommendations in the Governor's Task Force on Forestry report
2. Encourage more consulting foresters via training sessions to prepare forest management plans using Forest Stewardship guidelines by utilizing FLEP funds in the preparation of forest stewardship plans.
3. Provide landowners with a list of consulting foresters and an explanation of their services.
4. Develop and distribute a list of wildlife consultants to better meet the wildlife habitat management desires of landowners.
5. Develop and distribute a list of aquatic resource consultants to landowners with streams and ponds on their property.

Objective 3 - improve education efforts to reach the landowning public, decision makers, conservation organizations as well as the general public.

Action items:

1. Provide financial support for landowner education seminars that are routinely held in all four regions of Maryland
2. Develop a high quality, Maryland specific "Forest Stewardship" video for distribution and use by schools, external and internal partners, libraries etc.
3. Provide education and training opportunities to all partners.

Goal 5: Encourage internal DNR support for Forest Stewardship programs.
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*DNR Goals:*

Ensure a diverse, well-supported, cooperative and informed workforce.

*USFS Landowner Assistance Goals:*

Awareness

Improving Forest Management

Objective 1 - promote activities and accomplishments

Action items:

1. Develop a high quality, Maryland specific "Forest Stewardship" video for distribution and use by schools, external and internal partners, libraries, etc.
2. Provide information and articles when appropriate for inclusion in DNR information outlets such as "This Just In" and "The Natural Resource"
3. Develop an internal tracking process to quantify forest landowner "assists" on a quarterly basis by MFS personnel.

Objective 2 - work with other agencies to provide education, training and land management assistance.

Action items:

1. Work with State Forest and Park, Fisheries Service and Wildlife and Heritage personnel to develop stewardship demonstration sites on State land.
2. Provide forest stewardship input to Rural Legacy Program application reviews.
3. Work with Chesapeake & Coastal Watershed Service to fully implement the Strategic Forest Lands Assessment